

News Release
Idaho National Laboratory
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Partnership between test reactors to support nuclear energy search

IDAHO FALLS -- The Advanced Test Reactor National Scientific User Facility (ATR NSUF), centered at Idaho National Laboratory (INL), and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Reactor (MITR) have announced a partnership designed to increase user access to national reactor irradiation and testing capability.

NSUF Scientific Director Todd Allen said that with the ATR NSUF fall 2008 solicitation for experiments, the MITR will offer a portion of its test capability to the NSUF experimenters.

"This arrangement increases opportunities for reactor testing and provides the NSUF greater flexibility to respond to user needs," Allen said.

NSUF test space at both reactors is made available at no cost to external users whose projects are selected via a peer review process. This partnership with MITR is the first in an expected series of national partnerships designed to enhance the NSUF infrastructure and capability.

In April 2007, the U.S. Department of Energy designated Idaho National Laboratory's (INL) Advanced Test Reactor as a National Scientific User Facility. The designation will help assert U.S. leadership in nuclear science and technology and will attract new users – universities, laboratories and industry – to conduct research at the ATR. This facility will support basic and applied nuclear research and development (R&D), furthering President Bush's Advanced Energy Initiative, which will advance the nation's energy security needs.

The MITR is a 5-megawatt research reactor owned and operated by MIT. The MITR has carried out interdisciplinary research in advanced materials and fuel testing for next-generation nuclear systems. One of the many capabilities of the MITR involves the use of in-core loops and the ability to reach temperatures of up to 1,600 degrees centigrade. This allows researchers to replicate nuclear power reactor conditions to study the behavior of advanced materials and fuel designs for next-generation nuclear reactors. The MITR contains a wide range of irradiation facilities that are utilized for various nuclear applications such as neutron transmutation doping, neutron science and neutron capture therapy.

"This partnership represents a great opportunity to take advantage of unique national resources to help address the nation's energy challenges," said MIT's Vice President for Research Claude Canizares.

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